

A Day in Happy Land

CHARACTERS:

Spirit of Progress

Puritan Family of 1620:

-Puritan Father

-Puritan Mother

-Puritan Daughters (2)

Family of 1820:

-Mother

-Daughters (2)

Girl Who Introduces 1920

Bees (5)

Butterflies (5)

Mrs. Grouch

Cho Cho

Mother Buxom

Little Girl

Buxom's Children (5)

-Mary

-Susie

Fairy

COSTUMES:

-Progress wears rainbow-colored crepe paper ribbons, and she carries an electric lamp.

-The Puritan Mother and Daughters wear dark dresses and white caps, kerchiefs, cuffs, and aprons.

-The Puritan Father wears bloomers and woolen stockings, a leather-colored coat with dark sleeves, buckled hat and shoes.

-The short-waisted dresses of the 1820 Mother and Daughters should be of any bright colors.

-The Girl Who Introduces 1920 should be fashionably dressed.

-The Fairy could be dressed in pink and blue cheese-cloth with paper wings.

-Mother Buxom should look very neat in a simple wash dress and fresh apron.

-Mrs. Grouch is rather untidy.

-The Butterflies wear gray-brown stockings and dresses in either cheese-cloth or crepe paper with huge brightly colored paper wings. (Directions for making these and the wings of the Fairy and Bees may be had at any first-class stationary paper store.)

-The Bees have dark brown or black stockings, jerseys and trunks with little yellow boleros, covering their entire backs.

-Cho Cho has a black cap, red wig, and red and green diamonds decorating the waist of his white suit.

SCENE I

(Spirit of Progress carries a torch and enters from the back of the room and walks through the center aisle to the stage.)

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS: I am the Spirit of Progress. From the beginning I have dwelt in the hearts of men and have inspired and led them. Where I pointed, men pressed forward, braved peril and sickness, death and disaster, nor counted the cost, feeling no price was too great to pay if it brought new opportunities and greater happiness to their children.

In 1620, I pointed the way across the broad Atlantic and the Puritan, firm of purpose and relentless in zeal, embarked on the stormy voyage and landed in the wilderness. With courageous pluck and perseverance, he built a home for his children.

(Draws curtain to reveal Tableau—the Puritan home scene: Mother spinning. Father stands at open door with ax and gun. Oldest daughter is weaving on a small handmade loom. Second daughter is knitting a sock. If stage permits the tableau will be most effective with a large family of children, each one representing a different activity found in the Puritan home. Spirit of Progress explains while tableau is being shown.) Happiness was there but this was sometimes overshadowed by the constant toll that was necessary to provide for the family. Seeds had to be planted and harvested. Flour and meal had to be made from the grain. Sheep had to be raised and the wool sheared, spun and woven into cloth. Socks had to be knit. Hides had to be tanned into leather for shoes. Tools had to be made. Houses had to be built. Wild animals had to be killed, and all these things a single family had to accomplish.

(Draws curtains on tableau) But the Spirit of Progress influenced men's minds and new ideas came to them. Machinery was invented and the toil of the home grew less. Behold 1820. *(Shows home scene in 1820: Mother is making a cotton dress for a child, elder daughter is sewing, and younger child is studying.)* From the sunny southland came the bales of cotton. A new machine had just been fashioned, which could take out seeds and leave the fiber, and it could do it very quickly. Also a new machine to spin these fibers into cotton threads for weaving. These were invented in old England.

Power looms were made to do the weaving. Maidens no longer worked the shuttle, but an engine run by water wove the cotton oh, so swiftly. There were factories built for labor, which now left the home forever. Up the Hudson sails a steamboat and a railroad has been planned for so that materials from the factory can be carried to the family. Thus, the home of 1820 is a scene of greater leisure. *(End of Tableau—Draws curtain.)*

Happiness was there, but all was not well; ignorance and sickness still dwelt with men, and when they are present—happiness flees. These must be overcome. So the Spirit of Progress still leads on and men must follow where she leads. *(Spirit of Progress Exits.)*

GIRL INTRODUCING 1920: This is the year 1920. We have turned the pages of history back and caught a glimpse of the life of 1620, and then we skipped the volumes containing the record of two hundred years, and opened again to a picture entitled 1820. We are now on the threshold of a new century. Our stage is too small to illustrate the life of 1920. One needs only to cross the

street to see: railroads, telegraphs, telephones, wireless telegraphy, electrical appliances, automobiles, and airplanes. Can you imagine living in New York with none of these things? As a result of these inventions, the home no longer produces its' own appliances, but they are brought to its' door from every corner of the earth and are ready with very slight alterations for immediate use. Girls of today would feel misused if they were required to perform the tasks which fell to the maidens of 1620. And 1820 would not suit them much better. The inventions of the last hundred years have added greatly to peoples' comfort and many discoveries have been made about the laws of health. The people who use this knowledge are wiser and happier than ever before. To prove that this is so, we ask you to go with this child to spend a day in a home in Happy Land. (*Girl draws curtain, then passes out.*)

SCENE II

(*Little Girl is curled up in an easy chair talking to herself.*)

LITTLE GIRL: Dear, dear, I'm glad the war is over but I do miss working for my country. I used to feel so patriotic and now there is nothing to do.

(*Enter Fairy from rear, dancing down aisle chanting:*)

FAIRY:

People bad, people sick,
People poor, people thick,
This is no place for me, for me.
I'm off to the land of jollity.

(*She stops before Little Girl.*) Ah, little Miss, watch this wand; see happiness!

(*Curtain is drawn: Mother Buxom is shown getting breakfast for her 5 children. Enter Mrs. Grouch, a sour forlorn looking woman.*)

MOTHER BUXOM: Why, good morning, Mrs. Grouch. You must have gotten breakfast very early for your family.

MRS. GROUCH: (*Crossly.*) Breakfast nothing, they get their own breakfast.

MOTHER BUXOM: My children do too, but while they are taking their baths I get things started.

MRS. GROUCH: Bathe every day...what an idea. (*Whiningly.*) My children don't go to bed at night and they are so sleepy in the morning that they can't get up until about five minutes before school time. Then they drink a cup of coffee, cut off a chunk of bread and run. My children are always sick and don't have any appetite. How is it that your children are so healthy since they moved up here?

BUTTERFLIES: *(Five Butterflies fly in and fly around. They repeat in concert several times to Mrs. Grouch.)*

Why be sick? It costs money to be sick, and it's no fun besides. *(Butterflies fly out.)*

MRS. GROUCH: *(Weeping.)* You are making fun of my troubles, Mother Buxom.

(One of Mrs. Buxom's daughters comes in, back of stage, and begins setting table. Mother Buxom goes and sits down by Mrs. Grouch.)

MOTHER BUXOM: Sister Grouch, you listen to me. I've lived in this land of happiness two years now and happy years they have been; not for worlds would I live anywhere else, but I never would have found a house in Happy Land if butterflies and bumblebees had not guided me to it. Listen to what they say.

BEES: *(Enter 5 Bees.)* Here I come humming—the velvety bee busy as ever as you can see. *(Bees give a dance.)*

MOTHER BUXOM: Bumblebees, tell Mrs. Grouch what she must do to live in Happy Land.

(There are ten posters, illustrating health rules and containing appropriate titles, hanging in conspicuous places about the stage. Each Bee buzzes to two posters each. Reads them and buzzes back—the last poster they say together. Then all buzz out.)

BEE 1: *(Chanting or singing a jingle to the first poster)*

Windows open all the night

In our bedrooms airy;

Give us all an appetite,

For our breakfast early.

(Reading second poster.) A bath a day is our way.

BEE 2: *(Reading third poster.)* Milk is better than meat. This child drinks at least a pint of milk a day. *(Reading fourth poster.)* No coffee for him; Milk gives him vim.

BEE 3: *(Reading fifth poster.)* Thus, says Dr. Lusty, "Oatmeal makes kids husky." *(Reading sixth poster.)* Clean teeth are pearls of priceless worth.

BEE 4: *(Reading seventh poster.)* What we seek is a shampoo a week. *(Reading eighth poster.)* Fresh air and exercise make rosy cheeks and bright eyes.

BEE 5: *(Reading ninth poster.)* Fresh fruits and leafy vegetables every day, make us strong for work and play!

BEES: *(Reading tenth poster.)* Is your child building a strong, healthy body by drinking at least a pint of milk a day?

MRS. GROUCH: Sakes alive! Mother Buxom. Now aren't those butterflies odd? Don't tell me your children follow all that advice?

MOTHER BUXOM: Here come the children. I will let them speak for themselves.

(Four others of Mother Buxom's children, all of different ages, run in. The girl who has been setting the table and preparing breakfast joins them as they, hand in hand, dance around chanting to the Audience.)

BUXOM'S CHILDREN:

Five merry children here are we,
Healthy and happy as we can be;
Fresh air and bath may make you squeal,
Good morning, mother dear.

MOTHER BUXOM: Good morning, children, come to breakfast. Mrs. Grouch, won't you join us?

MRS. GROUCH: No, thank you, Mother Buxom. I've had my breakfast.

(Family seats themselves at breakfast table & serves breakfast. The menu is: baked apples, oatmeal, toast, and cocoa. The table is tastefully set and served in a simple, but good taste.)

MRS. GROUCH: My children would all fight if they sat down together.

BUTTERFLIES:

Oh, what would a cross patch's breakfast be—
a hard-boiled egg and a cup of tea.
(Repeat several times than prance off stage.)

MOTHER BUXOM: They mean, Mrs. Grouch, that such a breakfast makes cross patches. We have found that fruit is always appetizing first thing in the morning. Today, we are having baked apples.

(Girl removes baked apples and fruit dishes, then oatmeal is served. While fruit dishes are being removed, all the girls recite together & hold up their dishes containing baked apples)

BUXOM'S CHILDREN:

Fruit for breakfast is very good,
It makes us relish the rest of our food;
It contains mineral water and so
It helps to make our machinery go.
(Repeat)

MOTHER BUXOM: Mary, tell Mrs. Grouch some of the things which you have learned in school about foods and how that knowledge has helped us to plan breakfasts which keep all the children healthy.

MARY: (*Gets up from the table and goes over and seats herself in front of Mrs. Grouch. Family is eating oatmeal while Mary is reciting.*) During the war, a large percentage of the men examined for service in our Army were found to be physically unfit. Health surveys of the children in some of our large cities have been made, and a great number of these children have been found to be undernourished and undersized. In most cases, this condition has not been due to lack of food, but because these children, rich as well as poor, were not getting the right kinds and the right amounts of nourishment. Food must do these things for the body: It must keep the body warm. It must give one strength for work and play. It must keep the machinery of the body working right. It must repair worn-out parts and make the body grow.

Doctors and scientists have proved that every day, a person must eat some fruit and vegetables, some cereal, drink plenty of milk and eat some fat—like butter. Other foods; such as meat, fish, and eggs, may be added, but without the first mentioned, the body will not keep healthy. My mother gives us these foods every day so we have become strong, merry girls and we live in Happy Land. (*Mary returns to table. Another girl removes cereal and places cocoa and toast on the table. While she is doing this, the other children at table recite in concert.*)

BUXOM'S CHILDREN: Cooked oatmeal served with plenty of milk supplies both energy and building material. Eat them for breakfast and watch your cheeks puff out.

MOTHER BUXOM: Susie, tell Mrs. Grouch why we have cocoa and milk for breakfast instead of tea or coffee. (*While Susie is reciting, Mother Buxom serves cocoa and toast is passed.*)

SUSIE: (*Comes forward and speaks to the audience.*) Once upon a time, Happy Land was Unhappy Land, and I will tell you why. Many of the inhabitants were unhealthy. Then, almost every child drank tea and coffee, and didn't like milk. They were cross and nervous, and didn't do well in their lessons.

One night, what do you think happened? You'd never guess. A star shot out of the milky way and fell down, and landed right in the park in the center of the town. All the people rushed there and what do you suppose they found? Standing in the middle of a plot of grass was a cow! She must have ridden there on a meteor! It was the cow that jumped over the moon! This was a very queer acting animal. She wouldn't have jumped over the moon if she hadn't been. That night, she broke into a grocery store and got a bag of tea and coffee on each of her horns and threw two bags at a time over the moon, and she never stopped until the children gave up drinking them and took milk instead. As soon as they did so, they slept nine hours every night with their windows open, and their cheeks grew rosy, and they did better in their school lessons, too. When the cow saw this, she also went to bed and slept as she should. Now, Unhappy Land is Happy Land where only the grown-ups take tea and coffee and the children under five have at least a pint of milk a day, because it supplies practically all the materials which their bodies need. Even at twenty cents a quart, it is cheaper than meat and much better for them. The children who don't like milk, drink cocoa made with milk just as we are doing this morning. (*Susie goes back to the table.*)

BOXUM'S CHILDREN: (*All hold up cups of cocoa, fold napkins and all rise.*)

A very nice breakfast, Mother, dear.
We will brush our teeth and smooth our hair,
Then take our books and go to school,
For tardiness is against our rule.

(Children go out.)

(Butterflies enter.)

MOTHER BUXOM: Here come the butterflies bringing a message to us. *(Mother Buxom and Mrs. Grouch sit down and watch the butterflies give a dance. When it is over they fly off and a clown named Cho Cho enters from the back, shaking his tambourine and prances down the center aisle calling:)*

CHO CHO:

Cho Cho says and Cho Cho knows
That if you do as these rhymes say,
Eat and drink and bathe and play,
And sleep in the good fresh air,
You will surely be happy and gay.

(Clown runs up to Mother Buxom)

Mother Buxom, you're no dunce,
Get those children a good lunch;
Something easy to digest,
Leaving time for them to rest.

(Spies Bee 1 with tray in back and calls:)

Aha! Bumble—fly this way,
What have you upon that tray?

BEE 1: *(Comes upon stage and shows tray with lunch to Mother Buxom and Mrs. Grouch.)*

Here's a bowl of pea soup
With butter and bread,
This can be eaten quickly
With nothing to dread;
Then a glass of milk
And a ginger cake,
Eaten more slowly
Will give you no ache.

(Sets tray down and stands back.)

CHO CHO: *(Sees a Butterfly in back of room with another tray and calls:)*

Butterfly upon the wing,
Show us all the foods you bring.

BUTTERFLY 1: *(Brings tray down center aisle and goes upon stage to Mother Buxom and Mrs. Grouch.)*

Dinner, dinner do you wish
Baked potato, spinach, fish,
Cornstarch pudding with sliced fruit,
Such a dinner ought to suit.

(Sets tray down and dances out behind Cho Cho.)

CHO CHO: *(Beats tambourine, prances and dances, chanting his way out)*

Oh, Happy Land, oh Happy Land,
That's the land for me and you-
We don't get the stomach ache
From eating too much pie and cake.
We do get our problems right
We do work with all our might,
We are happy day and night,
And we wish the same to you.
Our motto's "keeping fit"
So each one can do her bit.
Fixing this world's quite a trick,
You can't do it if you're sick;
And it's up to me and you!
Come join our healthy band,
Make this a Happy Land,
For it's up to me and you!

(Goes off followed by Butterfly and Bumble Bee.)

MRS. GROUCH: I wonder, if I taught my children to do what Butterfly and Bumble Bee and Mother Buxom have told me, we might move to Happy Land. I'm going home to try.

(Fairy draws curtain.)

LITTLE GIRL: Oh, Fairy, you heard me say that I missed the war work. *(Jumps up, seizes Fairy by the hand)* Hurrah! I'm going to start a health campaign. Come, let's drink to the health of every child in the USA!

FAIRY: In the world!

LITTLE GIRL: *(Dances to the table where there is a bottle of milk. She pours out two glasses, gives one to the Fairy and says as they touch glasses:)* Here's to every child in the USA. May each do her bit to make the world a Happy Land.

SPIRIT OF PROGRESS: *(Standing in the back of the room holding a torch.)* Now it came to pass when all these things had been accomplished there were accomplished, there were many happy homes in the land, but injustice and discord were still present, so some families still suffered. Then men peered forward and beheld the torch of Progress gleaming on the horizon, and her clarion voice came ringing down from the far-distant future saying, "Hail citizens of

strong bodies and clear minds. Search for new knowledge and you shall find it; Try new experiences—thus will you learn how to overcome your difficulties. Ask your neighbor's aid and give him yours; so shall all men work together to make this earth a pleasant place in which to live.”